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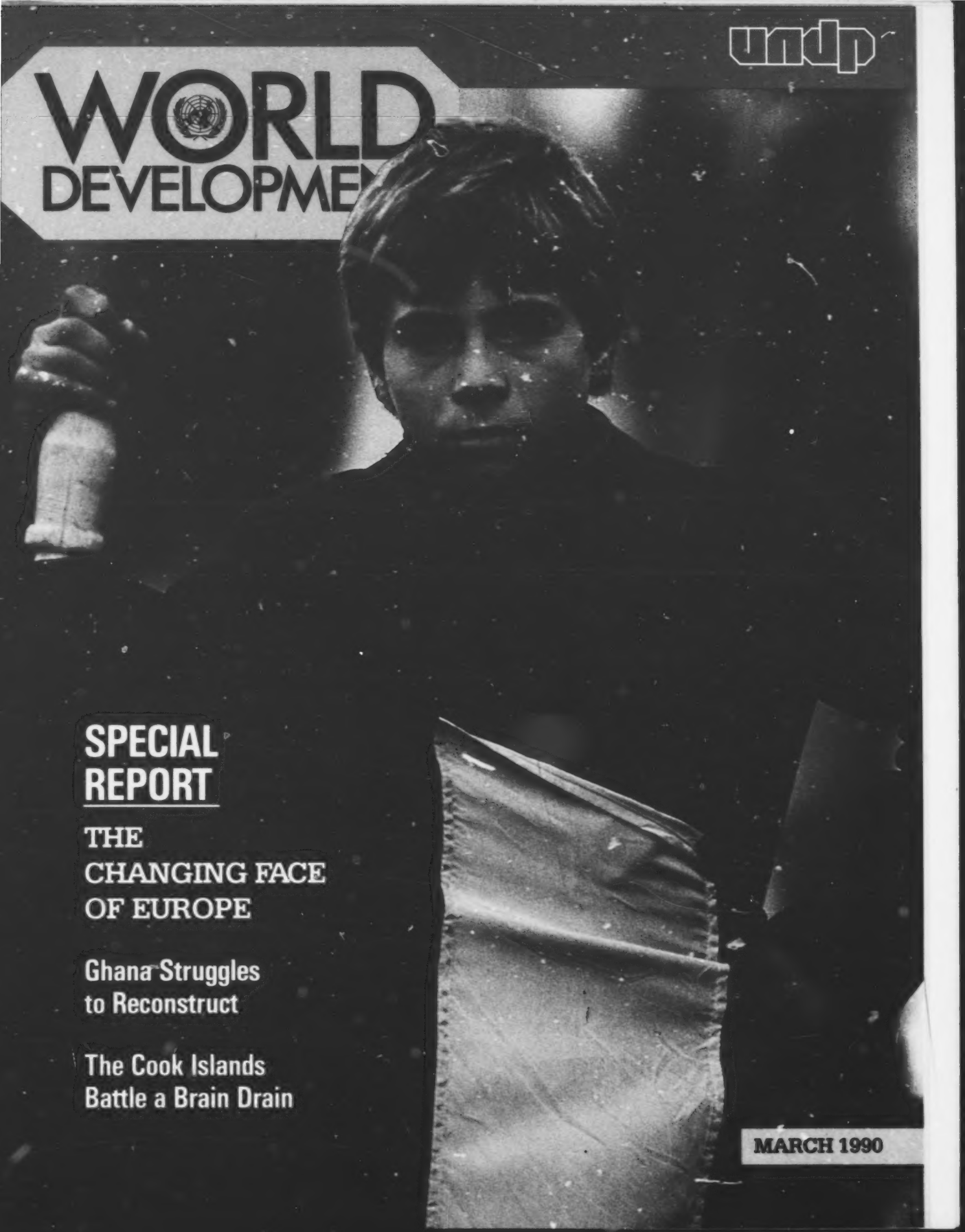
WORLD DEVELOPMENT



SPECIAL REPORT

THE CHANGING FACE OF EUROPE

Ghana Struggles to Reconstruct

The Cook Islands Battle a Brain Drain

MARCH 1990

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WORLD DEVELOPMENT

SPECIAL REPORT

THE CHANGING FACE OF EUROPE

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***Cover:* Young Romanian dissident. Photo by Chesnot/Sipa Press.**

Grasping the Immensity of Change

By Lloyd Garrison

Revolutions, in their early stages, seem to generate their own special momentum, sweeping everything before them like a tidal wave. Only later, as individuals contemplate the debris left behind as the wave recedes, does the immensity of the task of building anew sink in.

Such is the case in Eastern Europe, where 1990 began with Solidarity sharing power with President Wojciech Jaruzelski in Poland, and new governments in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, East Germany, Romania and Bulgaria scheduling their first openly contested elections in over 40 years.

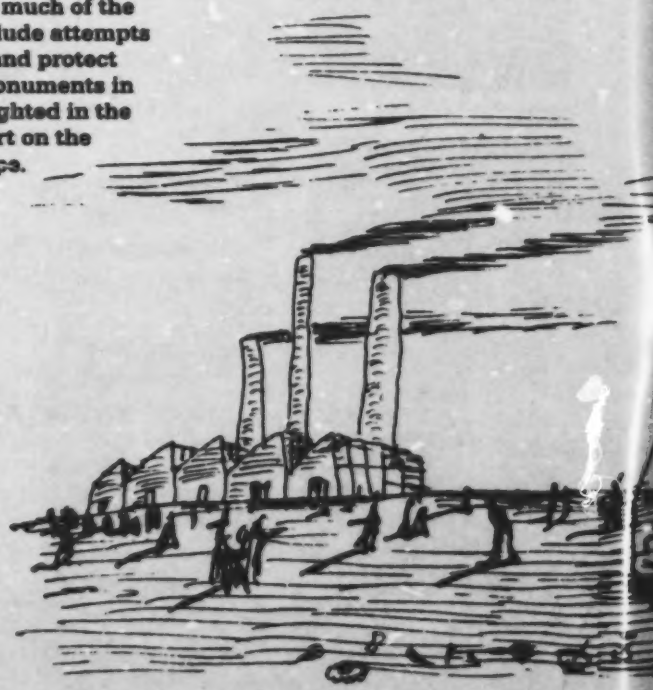
The only bloodshed accompanying these historic reversals was in Romania. And, as Sid Kane reports from Tirana, the only country in the region to stay the Stalinist course is Albania, whose government has a long tradition of marching to its own drum.

Now, as the first spring winds blow across the soot-streaked snows of Eastern Europe, Poland has already launched its own "deep perestroika" — a tight-fisted programme to devalue its currency, slash subsidies, sell money-losing state enterprises, cut the bureaucracy and curb inflation. Such drastic measures aim to make Poland the first country in Eastern Europe to switch to a free market economy. Others, led by Hungary, appear determined to follow Warsaw's lead.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is ideally positioned to assist such change. Because of its political neutrality and long experience in the region, UNDP is heping Poland and several other governments to screen and co-ordinate the sudden rush of aid offers from Western donors. UNDP is also helping to tackle widespread pollution that plagues much of the region. Such steps include attempts to save the Black Sea and protect crumbling national monuments in Poland, and are highlighted in the following special report on the changing face of Europe.

UNDP is now actively canvassing donors for resources to supplement its US$26 million five-year spending programme in the area. New funding will not, however, detract from UNDP's prior commitments. "We look forward to playing a major role in Eastern Europe," says UNDP Administrator William H. Draper III, "but not at the expense of our programmes in the rest of the developing world."

Meanwhile, as Mary Lynn Hanley reports from Warsaw, UNDP has already sponsored seminars to advise Polish entrepreneurs on how to launch new businesses and forge joint ventures with overseas capital. UNDP also stands ready to support the creation of commercial banks, stock exchanges, patent offices and new tax laws, all of which are fast becoming part of Eastern Europe's changing landscape. The tidal wave has generated an enormous opportunity for renewal. ■



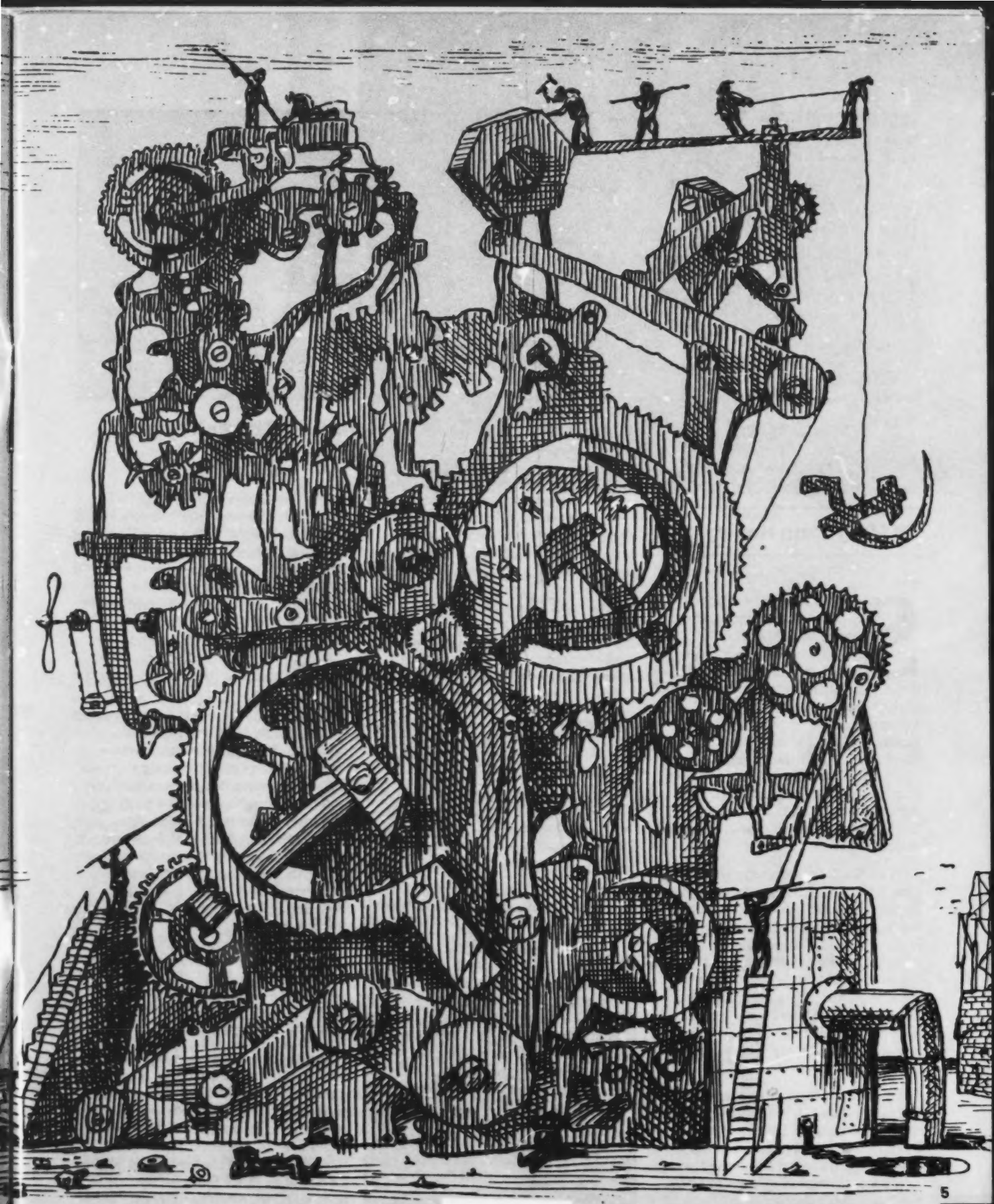


Illustration by Eugene Mihaesco

READEX FICHE

Can the Black Sea Be Saved?

Scientists are seeking ways to head off an environmental catastrophe.

By Mary Lynn Hanley

Sofia, Bulgaria — The Black Sea, whose waters lap the coastlines of Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey and the USSR, got its name from the fierce squalls and somber clouds which darken its shores each autumn. Beneath a surface tossed by these violent storms, this huge inland sea has sustained a thriving marine life for centuries. Now, however, the residues of modern agriculture and industry threaten to bury all living organisms inhabiting its waters under a cascade of poisonous chemicals.

"The Black Sea is on the verge of a catastrophe," says Professor Georgi D. Dechev, Head of Bulgaria's Institute of Ecology in Sofia, the Bulgarian capital. In fact, he warns, the situation is so bad that all life could disappear from the Black Sea and the chemicals poisoning it could begin polluting the atmosphere. "Whole towns would have to be evacuated," he says. "In small inlets one can already detect pollutants rising into the air."

There is still time, however, to head off such a disaster. With support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other UN agencies, the coastal countries are now urgently exploring ways to halt the Black Sea's demise.

Prof. Dechev explains that the Black Sea is especially vulnerable to pollution because it collects ten times more water per square metre of surface area than any other sea or ocean. Much of that pollution gushes into the Sea from several major European rivers. The most important is the Danube, which flows through eight highly industrialized countries which also practice chemically intensive agriculture.

As it turns out, considerable pollution has been present in the Black Sea since the dawn of history. Beginning in ancient times, wind, rain and river waters annually deposited natural fertilizers in the form of leaves and other organic matter in the Sea. Over thousands of years, this biomass settled to the bottom and began to decompose and diminish the supply of oxygen.

Oxygen could not be replaced because of another peculiarity of the Sea: its two strata, consisting of a topmost layer of fresh water from the rivers that empty into it, and a lower layer of salt water, which pours through the Straits of the Bosporous from the Mediterranean to the south. As oxygen cannot penetrate below the layer of fresh water, the supply reaching the bottom has always been limited. Without it, decomposing matter produces hydrogen sulfide, which is toxic to living things.

"The Black Sea was in a steady state for thousands of years," says Prof. Dechev. "But large amounts of man-made fertilizers are disturbing the balance between the oxygenized and non-oxygenized layers." The problem has been made worse by the construction of dams for energy and irrigation on the rivers flowing into the sea. This has reduced the influx of fresh water by 50 cubic kilometres per year. For centuries, while nine tenths of the water in the Black Sea remained poisoned by the accumulation of hydrogen sulphide, a layer of water 200 metres deep just below the surface stayed fully oxygenized. Now, that layer has been reduced to a depth of only 80 to 100 metres.

Further deterioration of the Black Sea — and the air quality in the communities surrounding it — could spell economic as well as ecological calamity for the more than 150 million people living near the Sea and in the Danube River basin. For resource-poor Bulgaria, for example, Black Sea beaches are a flourishing tourist attraction which

Pollution threatens Black Sea resorts which generate vital revenues for Bulgaria.

Bulgarian Association for Tourism and Recreation

the country is hoping to further exploit. In fact, a 20-year plan prepared by the government for the development of 380 kilometres of Bulgarian coastline and adjacent districts to the north and south calls for bolstering tourism and the development of agriculture, transport and communications to support it.

The plan includes a total ban on any pollutants that might be discharged into the Black Sea. Another priority is to stop the concentrated industrialization in the centre of the Bulgarian coastal zone and to develop the less densely populated north and south. Twenty national institutions are investigating and monitoring environmental problems related to the plan — using equipment, consultants and training provided by UNDP and the UN Department of Technical Co-operation for Development.

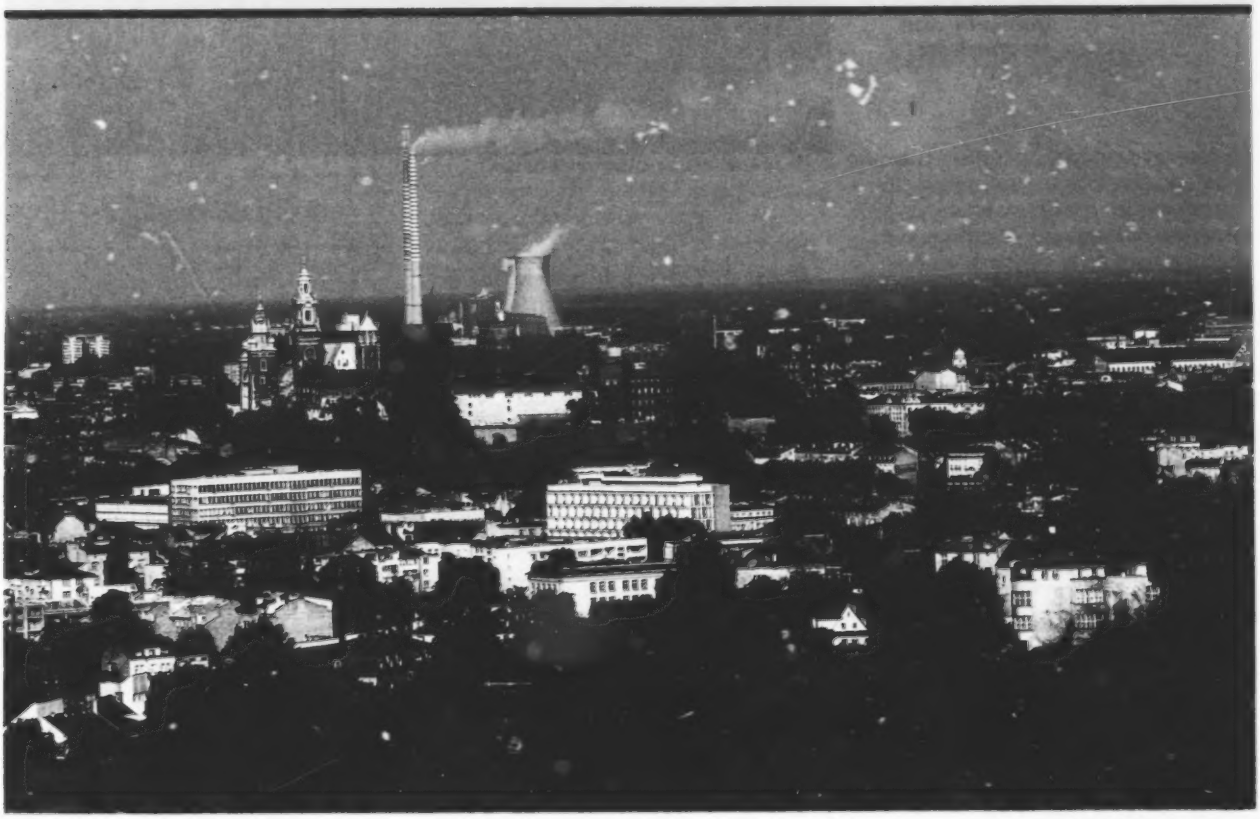
Professor Dechev has a broad prescription for treating the Black Sea itself. Stopping the inflow of fertilizers and the building of dams, which diminish the amount of fresh water coming into the Sea, head his list. But perhaps most intriguing is his proposal for mussel culture. "Blue mussels act as a natural purifier at one-tenth the cost of a man-made plant," he says.

The mollusks thrive on plankton, which consume phosphates and nitrates and proliferate when there is an abundance of these nutrients. Raising mussels on a large scale would prevent plankton from multiplying and using up precious oxygen. Shellfish cultivation could also create profits. Blue mussels, which are a prized delicacy in many European countries, grow to four or five centimetres and are ready for the table in just a year.

"You cannot stop human development or industrial development," says Professor Dechev, "but we have to support the ecosystems so that they are able to reach a new stable level." He is hopeful that the region's decision makers will agree on a common anti-pollution strategy once sufficient research findings are in hand. With the support of UNDP, the World Health Organization and the UN Environment Programme, the coastal countries have been trying to agree on a convention to thoroughly assess the Sea's environmental problems and draw up a blueprint to attack them.

The latest round in these efforts was a workshop of international experts held late last year in Sofia to consider a joint Bulgarian-Soviet proposal to launch a research and monitoring programme, to be carried out by national scientific institutions and international organizations. A task force is now preparing a final draft of this proposal. It will be closely linked to a complementary international effort addressing the pollution problems of Europe's major rivers. Right now, it offers the best hope for keeping the Black Sea alive. ■

The Battle to Save Cracow



Josef Polleross/JB Pictures

Soot from the Lenin Steel Works in Nowa Huta is corroding Cracow's architectural treasures.

By Mary Lynn Hanley

Cracow, Poland — This historic city of 800,000 people boasts 72 churches, 43 monasteries and 6,000 classic houses — all of which the government has declared to be national monuments. Preserving them, however, is proving to be a monumental task. While Cracow emerged from World War II untouched by bombing, emissions from a spate of peace-time metal and chemical

Pollutants threaten over 6,000 historic sites

industries now threaten to destroy its historic treasures with clouds of corrosive sulphur and fluoride-laden dust.

There is much worth saving. Originally inhabited by pagan civilizations, Cracow became a Christian city in 966 and has remained a centre of culture and learning ever since. Medieval, Gothic, Renaissance, and Victorian civilizations all came and went, leaving architectural testaments to their heydays. The Royal Castle where the King of Poland lived from the 11th to the 16th centuries remains standing. The tall Gothic spires of Santa Maria cathedral continue to attest to the deep faith of the Polish people, 90 per cent of whom are Catholics. The university where Copernicus studied in the 16th century remains intact, not far from rows of graceful 19th century town houses still used as residential dwellings.

The government is working with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Tourism Organization (WTO) to restore such landmarks. But at many historic sites, irreparable damage has already been done. "You see how the stonework is crumbling?" says Janusz Smolski, national Director of Poland's historical preservation programme. Mr. Smolski stands beside a bare patch of stone whose decorative bas relief has

UNDP photo by Mary Lynn Hanley

A blackened Gothic cathedral is flanked by 19th century Cracow town houses.

UNDP photo by Mary Lynn Hanley

Janusz Smolski examines a patch of the cathedral which has lost its bas relief.

completely eroded away on a wall of Santa Maria cathedral.

Conditions are no better inside the church. Details of once beautiful frescos are barely distinguishable beneath a layer of black soot. "Buildings restored ten or fifteen years ago are already starting to decline," says Mr. Smolski, "and those repainted only two or three years back are turning black again."

Many of the most destructive pollutants are discharged from plants in Czechoslovakia, 100 kilometres away. "Pollution comes from all directions," says Mr. Smolski, "as does acid rain. It's an international problem, calling for international action."

So far, inter-country talks on reducing factory wastes have gotten nowhere, and even domestic action will be hard to achieve. A prime offender is the hulking Lenin Steel Works in Nowa Huta, only 15 kilometres from Cracow. Built in 1950, it is Poland's largest steel complex and employs 30,000 workers. The plant's equipment is now hopelessly out-of-date. While the new government has recognized the need for modernization and anti-pollution measures, this will take considerable capital, which is scarce, and must be undertaken without creating wholesale unemployment.

Still, the government is committed to preserving Cracow's treasures, not only for their historical and cultural value but because of their potential to attract tourists, who bring in badly needed foreign exchange. Half of the six million tourists who annually visit Poland are drawn to Cracow, and most bear hard currency from the West. Given the changes Poland is undergoing, their number is likely to grow.

With UNDP funding, Mr. Smolski and several Polish colleagues recently visited Italy, France and the United Kingdom to study these countries' conservation techniques. They were especially impressed with the United Kingdom's efforts to find a function for empty historic buildings and are pursuing the same approach in Cracow. The elegant Verginic restaurant, for example, is housed in two restored 14th Century buildings.

For its part, the City Council of Cracow has adopted an environmental protection project for the Old Town, and plans for limiting pollution have been drawn up. The Council has called for installing emission control devices in factories, improving the quality of coal used locally and increasing the use of natural gas and electricity. Priority has also been given to redesigning the traffic flow in Cracow to relieve congestion, thus reducing harmful auto exhaust fumes in the Old Town. But lack of money in a time of acute austerity is limiting progress on all these fronts. Meanwhile, the crumbling continues. ■

Finding a Use for Industrial Waste

By Sid Kane

Budapest, Hungary — The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is helping the government here tackle a number of environmental problems that plague not only Hungary but much of Eastern Europe as well. UNDP-assisted projects are developing non-toxic pesticides, monitoring and improving air quality and designing protection systems for drinking water reserves drawn from the Danube, one of Europe's most polluted rivers.

Yet another UNDP programme is enabling Hungary's scientific community to deal with toxic industrial wastes, many of which defy traditional disposal strategies. "One approach has been to convert industrial and mining wastes into usable materials," says Dr Tamás Székely, Director of Research Laboratories at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

Fly ash, a powdery residue left over from incineration at community waste sites and at metallurgical and power plants, is often contaminated with heavy metals. "We're detoxifying the ash and using it in the production of high-grade ceramic bricks for housing and roof construction," Dr. Székely says. The brick-making process that the Laboratory has been refining — and hopes to patent — includes two procedures. One removes toxins by adding peat, and the other treats the ash with special acidic solutions.

The new bricks, once made entirely from clay, now contain as much as 30 per cent recycled fly ash. "UNDP's US$540,000 in assistance helped us acquire crucial laboratory equipment needed to develop this technology," Dr Székely says. "It also helped to attract additional financing from Hungarian institutions and industries."

Europe produces millions of tons of fly ash waste annually, and the region has been eager for new disposal strategies. Some countries are dumping fly ash deposits into the sea, or are burying it in abandoned mines. Now, says Dr. Székely, European governments, including West Germany and the Netherlands, are expressing strong interest in the ceramic brick approach.

Presently, two Hungarian manufacturing plants are utilizing 30,000 tons of the fly ash annually in brick production. Scientists hope that this will increase to 500,000 tons by 1995. Experts here contend that the use of the ash has also improved the quality of the brick by making it stronger. ■

UNDP photo by Sid Kane

Dr. Tamás Székely displays a ceramic brick made of clay and recycled fly ash.

Brave New World for Polish Entrepreneurs

By Mary Lynn Hanley

Poznan, Poland — It has not been easy for Adam Gorski to make a success of his small manufacturing business in Warsaw. One of a minority of ten per cent who make up the country's private entrepreneurs, the producer of energy-saving devices for industry has faced formidable obstacles in trying to make a profit. High taxes, telephones that don't work, a banking system that can take eight months to process a check from abroad and annual inflation near 600 per cent are just a few of his headaches.

The country is only now beginning to digest sweeping reforms. In January the new Solidarity-led government put into effect more than 25 economic laws, hammered out in less than four months — all designed to catapult Poland headlong into a market economy. Bringing down inflation is the immediate aim of the revolutionary economic package. If it works, that will be the good news. The bad news is that reaching that goal is exacting considerable pain on people who were already paying 70 per cent of their incomes for food and 30 per cent for housing.

One thing that could work in Mr. Gorski's favour is that the government is pulling out all stops to promote privatization. Ninety per cent of the economy is eventually expected to be in private hands. But to survive, firms will have to prove that they can pay costs for energy and raw materials now that subsidies have been lifted. They must retain employees at the low wages the new laws mandate. And they must find markets for their products despite high unemployment and government austerity measures.

Both the prospects and perils of private sector development were analyzed at an International Forum of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises the Government of Poland hosted in Poznan last October. Sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the forum attracted representatives from Bulgaria, Cyprus, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Turkey and Yugoslavia, as well as observers from China, Egypt, Ghana, Mongolia, Republic of Korea and Zimbabwe. Mr. Gorski was one of more than 100 Polish entrepreneurs who showed up, hoping for practical advice to help guide them into the new era.

"Small entrepreneurs build big nations," Gene Ward of the Hawaii Entrepreneurship Training and Development Institute told the group in his keynote address. "Entrepreneurs must have 'WIT' — whatever it takes." Mr. Ward stressed that launching a new enterprise involves adequate employee training, market research, obtaining sufficient financing and securing follow-up consulting services.

For Polish entrepreneurs, getting ahead means making do with very

little capital and a great deal of patience. In business for six years, with five people on his payroll, Mr. Gorski has had to pay 38 per cent of his profits to the government for health and social security benefits and nearly 14 per cent for taxes. Defaults or late payments from customers are a constant concern, since banks charge him up to 120 per cent interest for a loan.

Another Pole, Ryszard Wojcik, and his daughter Anne, took nine years to develop their poultry enterprise, starting with the proceeds from the sale of the electrical components business Mr. Wojcik formerly owned. The Wojciks are looking for foreign partners for their venture, which involves raising poultry with natural sunlight rather than in windowless, artificially illuminated buildings — an approach that results in a 90 per cent reduction in costly power, more eggs, and chickens that reportedly taste better and are more resistant to disease.

Attracting partners from abroad was uppermost in the minds of most Polish entrepreneurs at the forum and they were disappointed to discover that there were no capitalists with open checkbooks in hand ready and eager to invest. Brian Dabson of CEI Consultants Ltd., a British firm, explained why many potential Western partners are hesitant to take the plunge. He cited Eastern European laws limiting repatriation of profits, which some countries are already beginning to change. Other worries are uncertainty over raw material supplies, product quality standards and the fact that most joint venturing is done between companies which are already familiar with one another's operations.

Eastern European participants also recited a long list of local problems in running small enterprises. Chief among them are a lack of trained managers, the obstacles to obtaining credit and services in a timely manner, and the absence of a commercial real estate market, which makes finding premises difficult.

Polish businessman Adam Gorski has found it difficult to make a profit.

Ryszard and Anne Wojcik are looking for investors to back their chicken enterprise.

UNDP photos by Mary Lynn Hanley

UNDP photo by Mary Lynn Hanley

An exhibitor at the Poznan industrial fair hopes for a partner for a joint venture.

Harsh Medicine for Inflation

Key features of Poland's new economic package are:

- **A balanced budget**

  The number of government subsidized goods has been cut by two-thirds. Prices are free to rise and fall. Factories formerly supported by low interest rates receive commercial loans only. Government revenues are to be enhanced by the sale of bonds and state property. Stiff penalties will be levied on tax-evaders.

- **A credible currency**

  The zloty has been devalued. The government is initially defending the new rate, backed by US$1 billion from the International Monetary Fund and other donors. This is expected to restore faith in the currency.

- **Wage restrictions**

  Wage hikes are being kept below inflation. Employers wishing to pay their workers more than the limit face fines.

- **Unemployment insurance**

  Benefits are available for those thrown out of work from enterprises which do not survive. The government expects up to 400,000 jobless but the figure could be much higher.

Organizers considered the forum only a first step in promoting entrepreneurship in a region where several countries have only recently become interested in developing their private sectors. It was recommended that three additional workshops be held, one on the regulatory and structural environment for small businesses in general and joint ventures in particular, another on venture capital, and a third on privatization. It was also urged that interested countries familiarize themselves with good models of entrepreneurship through study tours abroad.

UNDP is providing additional support to Poland as it embarks upon one of the most radical economic restructurings in its history. Through the UN Fund for Science and Technology for Development, UNDP plans to set up a "Business Incubator" which will nourish fledgling enterprises by enabling businessmen to obtain low rent premises, technical advice, telefax and other services in one common location. The need to train managers for both public and private sectors was stressed by a recent Management Development Programme mission, and follow-up action will be taken. Donors will be approached to ascertain their interest in a Trust Fund or Development Bank for Eastern Europe. If Polish entrepreneurs can survive the economic turbulence of the next few months, they might just have a bright future. ■

The Adriatic Coast Gets a Lift

UNDP photo by Sid Kane

The town of Supetar on Brac.

By Sid Kane

Supetar, Yugoslavia — On the first morning of this winter's harvest season, as villagers on the island awaken to the sound of trucks moving across olive plantations, farmers here are expressing a renewed sense of hope and are looking forward to a good year. In fact, newly introduced agricultural techniques and equipment have marked the dawn of a new era for olive farmers throughout Yugoslavia's coastal region. The government — which is non-aligned and not part of the East Bloc — has made it a national priority to improve the industry which for years had been depressed. Now, with harvest yields up, it is clear that it is succeeding.

Olive oil production on Brac is rising due to the government's improvement programme.

"It is important that the olive industry continues to be modernized because young people are now returning to Brac to work in the groves," says Ivo Jelinčić, a farmer near the town of Postira. "Without the young this island is like a ship without sailors."

This is a concern close to the hearts of many longtime residents on this windswept island in the Adriatic Sea off Yugoslavia's western coast. For centuries, olive farming has been a tradition on Brac, as much a part of the fabric of life here as the deep, azure-blue sea. But after World War II, the age-old industry languished as young people began leaving the islands and the coastal region in droves, drawn to Yugoslavia's interior — and to foreign lands — in search of higher paying jobs.

Many coastal communities and entire islands throughout Dalmatia were left depopulated, while olive production — long a mainstay of the economy — hit record lows. Now, the Yugoslav Government, which farmers say indirectly contributed to the problem after the war by encouraging heavy industry at the expense of agriculture, is making amends with its modernization programme. It also hopes to draw young people back to the places where their absence has been sorely felt. "This is one of the biggest challenges facing the country," says Dajak Lenko, an agriculture expert on Brac, the largest of the Dalmatian islands.

More is at stake here than just another cash crop. "The olive tree is part of everybody's life and heritage," says Helenka Aras, Deputy Director of the Government's Olive and Olive Oil Improvement Programme. "It's a national symbol that dates back to ancient times, and people take it seriously."

Not only is olive oil served up in generous quantities in homes and restaurants throughout Yugoslavia, it has become part of the culture and mythology of the land. An olive branch with a blossom is worn at weddings, brought as an offering to a friend's house and placed at the grave site of a loved one.

At the industry's height in the 19th century, Brac was producing 8,000 tons of olive oil. This figure dropped to a low of 150 tons by the 1950s, but has recently risen to three times that, largely because of the government's modernization efforts, which are supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with experts from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO).

The decline of the olive industry was by no means confined to Brac. Yugoslavia was producing 30,000 tons of olive oil annually before the turn of the century; by the 1960s the figure had plummeted by 90 per cent.

To turn things around, the government has introduced higher-yielding varieties of olive trees from Italy. It has also provided farming equipment, new oil processing plants, and training programmes for farmers — many of whom

UNDP photos by Sid Kane

A greenhouse at the Institute of Adriatic Culture produces 80,000 olive tree seedlings a year.

A greenhouse at the government's Institute of Adriatic Culture in the coastal city of Split is producing 80,000 olive tree seedlings annually. These are distributed to farmers, who, in return, give a percentage of their olive oil to the government for marketing. Unlike the traditional Yugoslavian olive tree that bears fruit every two years, the new varieties produce fruit annually.

The country as a whole, which has been importing 800 tons of olive oil and 700 tons of table olives each year to make up for its domestic shortage, expects to cut imports by 30 per cent in 1990 due to the improvements that have been made. It hopes to become self-sufficient within the next few years.

In the town of Porec, as on the hilly island of Brac, results are being measured another way. "Young people are coming back to farm olives because it's a better living now," says Italo Zuzic, an agricultural engineer with the Agro-laguna co-operative. There are 110 olive farmers in this breezy, picturesque town, a third more than there were at the beginning of the programme. Unlike their forefathers, however, most of them are now starting the day by using harvest machines, in groves filled with trees that bear fruit every year. ■

Ivo Jelincić, an olive farmer on Brac.

have organized into co-operatives up and down the jagged, sun-baked coast. Now that the industry has begun to rebound, credit is being given to the government and to UNDP. UNDP's US$1.6 million contribution has been used to finance research tours by government specialists to other olive-producing countries, and to prepare a feasibility study that led to a $54 million government investment in the rehabilitation of old olive oil mills, new irrigation systems, access roads and overall plantation improvement.

"This effort has helped the Yugoslav farmer get back on his feet," says Rikardo Kosihozic, who, following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, makes his living off a small olive plantation in Porec, a seaside town just south of the Italian border. "We've received new varieties of seedlings that bear more fruit, and training in the use of harvest machines, sprayers and motor cultivators. My workload has decreased by 30 per cent while yields are increasing."

Tirana Stays the Course

By Sid Kane

Tirana, Albania — On this chilly, winter evening, as news of reforms in Eastern Europe dominates the world's front pages, the atmosphere is festive on New Martyr's Way, the capital's main boulevard. Skanderbeg Square, a vast walkway at the city's centre, is brightly lit and teeming with people. Colourful banners decorate public buildings, and preparations are underway for a large military parade. "We're getting ready for a big celebration," says one Albanian. "It is an important moment in our country's history."

Indeed it is. But the buoyant mood that abounds here has little in common with the historic changes that are transforming Albania's neighbours. There is no talk of change in this fiercely independent socialist country. Rather, Albania is preparing to commemorate the 45th anniversary of its liberation from occupying forces in 1944, and the birth of its communist regime under the late President Enver Hoxha.

Albania has built a reputation for being the most isolated country in Europe whose borders have remained largely sealed to foreigners. Only recently has this image begun to wane slightly, with the entry of small numbers of tourists and an increase in commercial and diplomatic ties.

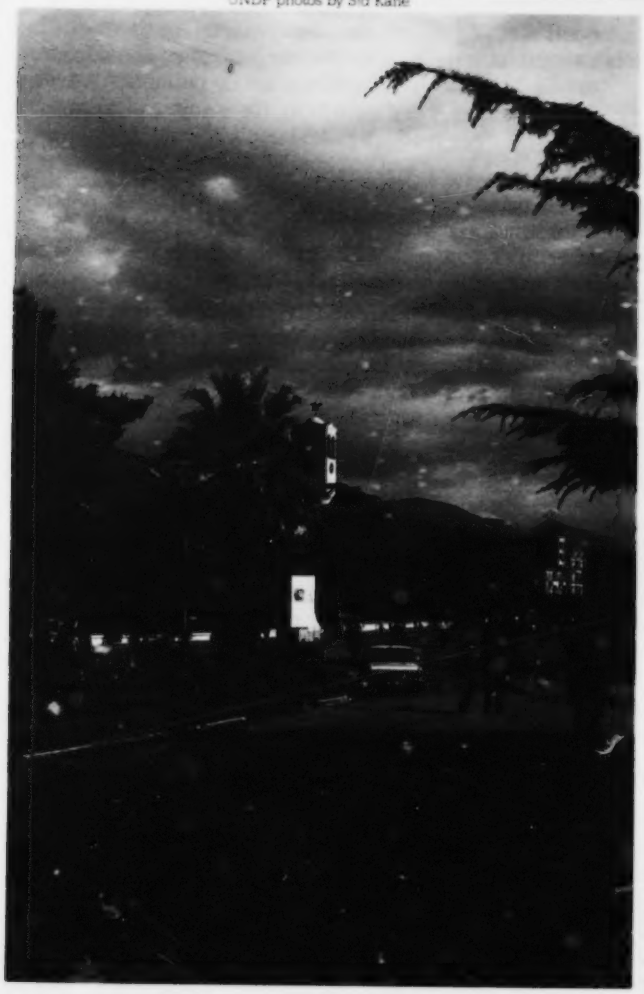
But Albania still remains a little known and rarely visited country. It maintains no relations with either the United States or the Soviet Union, and belongs to no economic or military alliances. It adheres rigidly to the principles of Stalinism and permits no private enterprise or organized religion. Nor does it allow the acceptance of foreign credits, which is why the country has absolutely no foreign debt, a claim that few other developing countries can make. It pays for much-needed imported goods with cash earned from exports, which totalled US$363 million in 1988. Albania is one of the world's largest producers and exporters of chrome. It also exports agricultural goods, petroleum and copper, and sells electricity to Yugoslavia and Greece.

Seemingly unaffected by the political and economic revisions taking place to the north, Albania remains the last outpost of socialism on a continent where it was once widespread. Statues of Stalin, Lenin and Hoxha abound. "We want to avoid the changes and troubles that are taking place in other parts of Eastern Europe," says Sokol Gjoka, a foreign news editor for *Zeri i Popullit*, Albania's major daily. "Socialism is good when it works, and it is working here."

To ensure that its social and economic systems remain intact, and to improve living conditions for its people, Albania has set out to strengthen its economy by acquiring modern equipment and technology and by boosting foreign trade. In the last 20 years, exports have jumped four times, while imports, mostly machinery, spare parts and equipment coming from such countries as Czechoslovakia and China, have tripled. In the same time the small Balkan country has become largely self-sufficient in producing

A statue of Albanian national hero Gjergj Kastrioti-Skanderbeg in Tirana.

UNDP photos by Sid Kane



A worker at the Institute of Informatics and Applied Mathematics beneath a portrait of Enver Hoxha, the late Albanian President.

The most common modes of transportation are bicycles and walking.

Workers outside a UNDP-aided wine production plant in Durres.

food grains, until a prolonged drought forced a hike in its agricultural import bill.

To visit Albania today is to take a leap back in time. There are no private cars. Its cities are quiet and the air relatively free from pollution. Ox carts and bicycles are plentiful, and walking is by far the most common form of transportation. Men, women and children are frequently seen walking long distances with large loaves of bread under their arms, or riding on the backs of donkeys up and down the mountainous back roads. Also a common sight are the expansive fields of crops in the valleys and on steep hillsides, where people mostly work the soil with their hands. Few tractors are seen. About two-thirds of the country's 3.1 million inhabitants live in the rural areas, where most find employment on agricultural co-operatives or on state farms.

Technologically, Albania has been regarded as being 20 to 30 years behind the rest of Europe, but it is working hard to close the gap by modernizing its industries with such additions as new textile mills, food processing machinery and mining equipment. It is also among the poorest countries on the continent. An average salary is about $100 a month, but basic living necessities are relatively inexpensive. Monthly rent typically costs only two days' wages. And everyone is guaranteed employment, free education and health care benefits. "We have a principle in this country — to stay independent economically and therefore politically," says Mr. Gjoka. "We've developed more slowly than other European countries but everything here belongs to us."

Politics aside, Albania is clearly interested in modernizing and has made development a high priority. "Our goal is to make Albania strong — both externally and internally — so that it can better enter the world economy and produce more goods for export," Mr. Gjoka says. "We need new technologies and more specialists."

Signs of progress are already evident. Modern buildings, museums, parks and cultural institutions grace the bustling centre of Tirana. Largely because of improvements made in health care services, the life expectancy rate has increased from 38 in 1945 to 72 today. And illiteracy, which ran as high as 80 per cent at the time of the country's liberation, has become virtually nonexistent, according to the government.

In the search for new technologies and specialists that it lacks, Albania has turned to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for help. The agency is the country's

UNDP has helped upgrade laboratories at the Enver Hoxha University.

UNDP photos by Sid Kane

sole multilateral development partner, and is now assisting it in securing support from other donors.

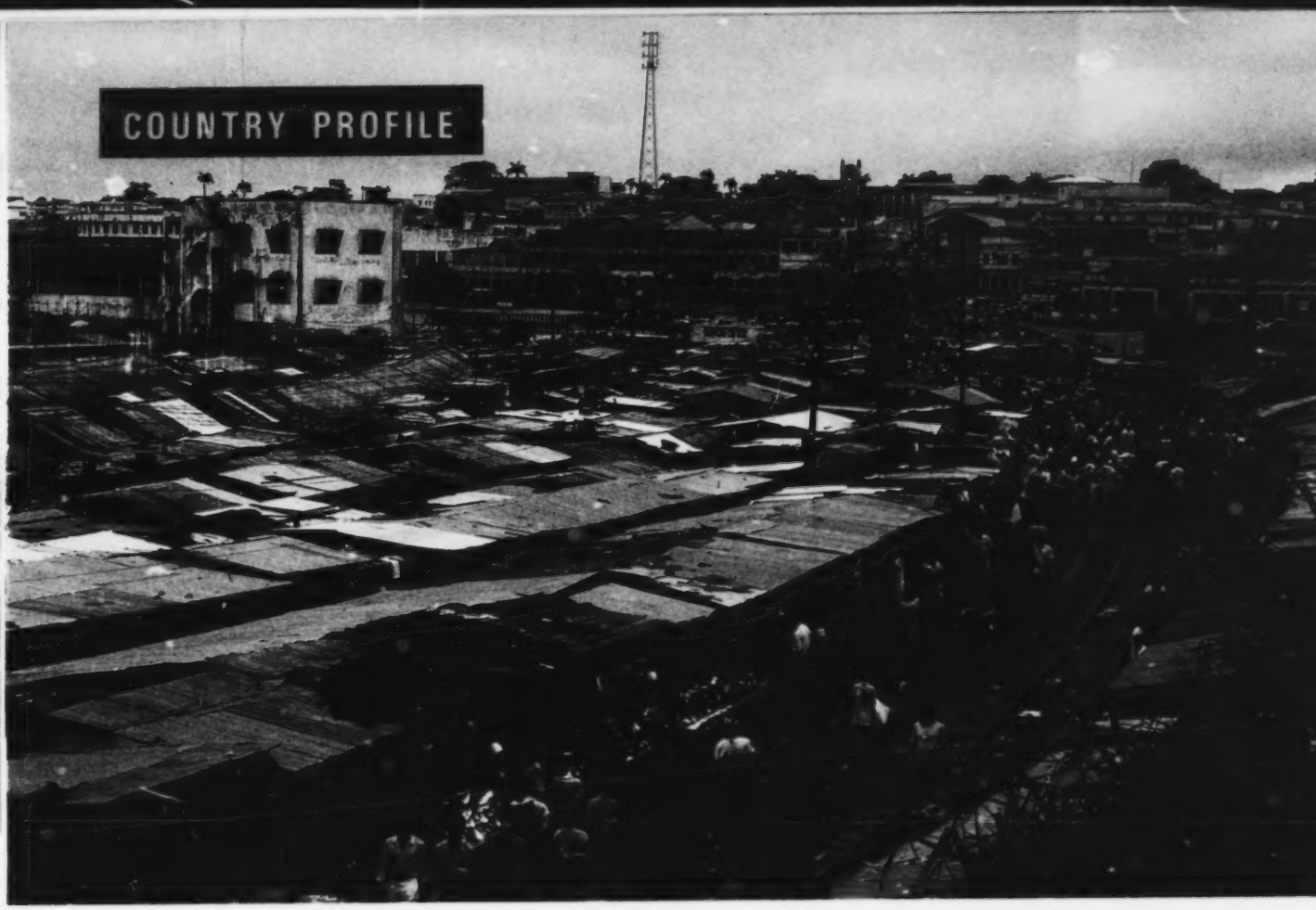
To meet Albania's need for advanced computer capabilities, UNDP has helped the Institute of Informatics and Applied Mathematics acquire new equipment and training. As part of the project, an informatics network has been established that links all government ministries with the computer brain power available at the Institute. "The country's problem-solving capabilities have been modernized which has had a big impact," says the Institute's Director, Kristian Bukuroshi. Specifically, the network has led to improvements in the design and cost-effectiveness of national construction projects, and in conducting seismic risk analysis for new dams, bridges and buildings.

To assist the country's growing wine-making sector, UNDP is helping to establish a pilot plant in Tirana to improve the quality of Albanian wines. Wine-making flourished here until the 15th century, when it was suppressed following the Ottoman invasion. Albania currently produces 15 million litres of wine annually, and exports 25 per cent of it to Eastern Europe. "The industry badly needs new equipment, especially modern cooling systems and stainless steel tanks for storage," says Mr. Vangjel Zigori, director of the project. "The goal here is to help spread this technology and know-how throughout the industry."

As new equipment replaces the old during the next few years, exports are expected to jump by at least 40 per cent, Mr. Zigori says, fitting nicely into the government's game-plan for boosting foreign trade.

Apart from acquiring new machinery and know-how, Albania has also made strides in increasing tourism and commercial and diplomatic ties. The small, mountainous country has forged diplomatic links with 120 governments, up from 35 in 1966. The UN Secretary-General, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, has agreed in principle to visit Albania, which would make him one of the most senior foreign officials that the government has received in recent years.

While Albania has set out to increase international ties, and to reap more from its resources, it is not proceeding hastily. "We do not want fast, uncontrolled growth that could undermine our environment or culture," says Ilir Fico, a member of the Committee of Science and Technology. "We want carefully planned and sensible development." And despite the deviation of other Balkan nations, that means continuing on a steady socialist course, come what may. ■



Making Tough Adjustments

Ghana struggles to reconstruct

By Lois Jensen

Kumasi, Ghana — The largest market in Ghana is in Kumasi, where vendors' stalls stretch as far as the eye can see. The streets are overflowing with life, with the movement of people and goods, with cars, bicycles, hand-built carts and *tro tros*, the brightly painted trucks that convey an irrepressible Ghanaian spirit. "No condition is permanent," says the slogan drawn on the back end of one. "All days are not equal," says another. "Such is life," says a third.

The mood throughout the country today is one of cautious optimism. Recovering from famine and an almost total economic collapse, Ghana has

Ghana's largest market is in Kumasi, in the Ashanti Region.

GHANA

UNDP photos by Lois Jensen

The mood throughout the country today is one of cautious optimism.

sustained a growth rate of more than five per cent a year since 1983, one of the highest in sub-Saharan Africa. It has become a model for the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) because it is one of the few countries where structural adjustment policies have been doggedly pursued and are now showing tangible results. Donors from industrialized countries, who are searching for a solution to the conundrum of African economies, are pouring huge amounts of aid into this small West African nation.

Most agree that conditions here have improved. Yet the majority of Ghanaians still don't have money enough to buy the imports that only recently began filling the shops. And economists are worried about persistent inflation and the lack of private investment. "The attitude of most people is wait and see," says Andrews Taylor, a Ghanaian programme officer with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

In 1957, Ghana was full of hope as the first African nation to achieve independence. With over 60 per cent literacy, the ex-British colony was one of the most advanced nations on the continent. Ghana produced ten per cent of the world's gold, had US$1 billion in reserves and a per capita income roughly that of Spain. But during the 1970s, following a succession of coups, conditions deteriorated.

By 1983, public transportation ground to a halt for lack of fuel and spare parts. Factories were running at one-tenth capacity. Hospitals were without supplies. On top of this came the worst drought in Ghana's recent history, accompanied by widespread bushfires. That same year, unemployment was exacerbated by the expulsion of a million Ghanaian workers from nearby Nigeria.

A Ghanaian merchant sells local cloth as well as expensive imports.

Paralyzed for lack of funds — and with little to lose — Ghana in 1983 launched an economic recovery programme that was used as a bargaining chip in negotiations with the World Bank and the IMF. It embraced a mixed market economy, dismantling the centralized approach adopted by former governments. At the same time, Ghana's head of state, Flight-Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings, vowed to reactivate Ghana's rural economy as an essential first step towards generating sustained growth. Among the changes was the radical restructuring of the development planning system to give rural communities a greater voice — a move strongly supported by UNDP.

Ghana's economic reforms echoed many of those prescribed by overseas financial institutions. These included currency devaluations and the elimination of most price controls, a reduction in government subsidies, privatization of state-owned enterprises and extensive layoffs of state employees.

But these measures were not adopted wholesale. The country's leaders had a clear sense of what was required — and what would be supported by the people. A government information campaign clearly articulated why sacrifices were necessary and, thus far, Ghana has been spared the often violent backlash that has accompanied structural adjustment programmes elsewhere.

The results of reform here have been impressive. Cocoa exports nearly doubled in the last five years due to a tripling of prices paid to farmers by the state Cocoa Marketing Board. Some 30,000 civil servants were cut from the government payroll, turning an annual budget deficit into a surplus. Inflation has slowed to 30 per cent a year, down from 123 per cent in 1983. Arrears in foreign payments have been virtually

eliminated, and the balance of payments is in an overall surplus.

But statistics do not necessarily reflect improvements in the human condition, says one World Bank official. Cameron Duodu, a Ghanaian journalist writing in a West German development magazine, contends that "the standard of living in Ghana has eroded at a disastrous rate." Mr. Duodu believes that this is largely due to the devaluation of the cedi from 2.75 to one US dollar in 1983 to 350 to the dollar today. Unquestionably, wages remain uniformly low. Even the best-paid civil servants earn little more than $50 a month.

The government, well aware of such hardships, became the first in Africa to launch what it calls a Programme of Action to Mitigate the Social Costs of Adjustment. Known as PAMSCAD, the programme has attracted $85 million from foreign donors and has set a precedent for economic adjustment programmes elsewhere. PAMSCAD projects are all geared to ease the suffering of the most vulnerable. They range from a low-cost human waste management project in Kumasi to labour-intensive public works and large-scale redeployment of former civil servants — a step backed by both the World Bank and UNDP.

The government has also initiated a bold new strategy to reshape the way planners are attempting to put long-term development back on track. "In 1983 there was no development planning at all. It was what you would call crisis management or fire fighting," says Donald Pearson, chief technical adviser to a national development planning project supported by UNDP. "What they did was to turn all their basic macroeconomic policies and their planning system around."

Toward this end, almost 70 per cent of UNDP's current resources for Ghana, which total $40.2 million, are targeted for the planning effort. The keystone is a $2.4 million project that turns the former central planning system upside-down, employing a "bottom-up" rather than "top-down" approach. "The end goal is nothing less than the transfer of power and resources to the smallest units of society," says Anne Forrester, UNDP's Resident Representative in Ghana.

Setting priorities, such as whether to build roads, dig wells, or construct health centres, are being drawn up by communities themselves, based on general guidelines issued by national authorities. These priorities will be approved by elected officials in each of the country's 110 districts and ultimately submitted to a newly created National Development Planning Commission. Together with recommendations from central ministries, the Commission will draw up a national development plan that will take into account macroeconomic implications as well as how future spending will affect the nation's education, health and employment.

Ghana's structural adjustment aims to spur small industries such as this lumber mill in Kumasi.

UNDP photos by Lois Jensen

Boosting agriculture is seen as one of the keys to an economic turnaround.

One objective of the new planning structure is to "harmonize" development efforts, an elusive concept often spoken about in development circles, but rarely achieved. It is an attempt to avoid the pitfalls of planning by sector alone, says Yefusa Okulo-Epak, chief technical adviser to a local-level planning project supported by UNDP and Habitat — the UN Centre for Human Settlements. As he drives along a rugged dirt road in Ghana's Eastern Region, Mr. Epak points to a nearby hospital that is without electricity and running water because the Department of Health neglected to coordinate its activities with other government bodies.

Mr. Epak recently supervised a project to test new ways of developing planning skills at the regional, district and village levels. By the time the project ended late last year, a long-term development plan had been produced by and for the people of Ghana's Eastern Region. Nearly 800 community leaders and local officials were trained in how to set priorities, draw up development budgets and work as a team with neighbouring towns and districts.

Essam, the more successful of two test-case communities, now boasts a community centre housing a health clinic, bank, post office, guest house, library and meeting hall. Recently inaugurated, the centre is the culmination of a number of other self-help activities that are blossoming in this community of 22 villages, including the construction of an access road, the digging of ten wells, the development of soap and brick-making industries, and the establishment of a housing cooperative. In 1986, after an unsupervised child drowned, Essam built a day care centre.

While each completed project had a catalytic effect, villagers acquired a broader view of the development process through training workshops. "Our relationship with other villages has changed for the better," says Joseph Oduro, a teacher and secretary of Essam's development committee. "We used to see each other only at funerals or other special occasions. Now we are interested in establishing linkages. We learned that if you want development you have to join hands."

The achievements of Essam are exceptional. But they are proof that, given proper support, communities themselves are the best judge of their own development problems and solutions. "As soon as we can lay a base for the decentralization process it will work," says Mr. Epak. "Whether or not there will be the resources to lay that foundation nationwide is another question."

Although sustained economic recovery and a fully operational planning system are long-term prospects in Ghana, both have been accorded the highest political backing. After years of hard work, the new National Development Planning Commission was approved by Ghana's Provisional National Defense Council, and elections for new district assemblies were held in 1988 and 1989. With UNDP assistance, mobile planning teams are now active in all ten regions of the country, helping to bring the skills of local planners and other officials back up to speed.

"In a country whose people have felt much deprivation and, indeed, a certain alienation, the process of rebuilding confidence from the roots is a painstaking one," says Ms. Forrester. Yet no one can deny the ambitious nature of the Ghanaian effort, which will almost certainly have ramifications for other developing nations if it succeeds.

"Other African countries are said to have decentralized systems," says Mr. Pearson, who has worked in nearly every Anglophone country on the continent. "But what they have are people operating at the district level who are agents of the central government, rather than genuine local representatives. If this new system works," he adds, "it will be a first for Africa." ■

VOLUNTEERS

The Cook Islands Battle a Brain Drain

By Cherie Hart

Dr. Bhuyan accompanies his paralyzed patient on the flight to Samoa.

Raratonga, Cook Islands — Pati Tautua was carried off the rugby field on a stretcher, paralyzed from the neck down after attempting to tackle a larger opponent. Rushed to Raratonga Hospital in the Cook Island's only ambulance, the visiting rugby player from Samoa was treated by Dr. Laksheswar Bhuyan, the sole surgeon in the country. Accustomed to improvising, Dr. Bhuyan fashioned a neck brace from cardboard and cotton. When his patient gained consciousness the following day, the two began painstaking physical therapy sessions. A week later, Dr. Bhuyan flew with him for more intensive treatments in Western Samoa.

From head injuries to hernias, from cesarean births to heart attacks, Indian-born Dr. Bhuyan handles just about every kind of injury or ailment that occurs in the Cook Islands. He is one of the country's 26 United Nations Volunteers (UNVs), including five who are doctors.

Dr. Bhuyan left a prestigious job as head of a hospital surgical unit in India to take the volunteer assignment in the Pacific. "I couldn't turn down this remarkable opportunity to live in another culture," he says. "I have to admit, at first I had no idea where the Cook Islands were. Now, the country and its people will be part of my life forever."

UNVs provide an affordable means of obtaining specialists in medicine, energy planning, engineering, mechanics and agriculture for the Cook Islands — and more than 100 other countries in the developing world. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) pays for travel, resettlement expenses, motorbikes and US$6,280 annually for each UNV the government provides each UNV with housing and an additional $5,000 a year.

"UNVs are masters of their trades," says Tai Manuela, Director in the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development for the Cook Islands. "We depend heavily on them here because we have such a severe brain drain. Many of those with skills are leaving for what they think are greener pastures."

Some 1,000 local citizens depart every year. The country is a self-governing territory in free association with New Zealand. Cook Islanders are New Zealand citizens, with the right of free access to New Zealand. Presently, 40,000 Cook Islanders live overseas while only 18,000 live at home. With such an easy outlet for its population, the government has a hard time creating — and keeping — a skilled labour force. "Some of the UNVs are our top advisors in technical matters," says Deputy Prime Minister Inatio Akaruru. "We rely on their vast field experience."

But even some UNV supporters criticize the dependence they create for high-quality expertise at bargain basement prices. "We are grateful for their knowledge and dedication, but in some ways they are prolonging our labour problems," says Mr. Manuela. "We need to make sure UNVs impart some of their skills to the Cook Islands. Otherwise, our problems will remain long after they have gone home."

Three UNVs who are energy experts are trying to look beyond quick-fix solutions to find long-term means of solving the country's energy problems. Providing electricity to a country scattered over two million square kilometres of South Pacific Ocean is no easy task, especially when the 240 square kilometres of land have no exploitable

minerals or fuel resources.

Out of a total of 15 islands, only ten have electricity. UNVs are training local electricians to repair cables, maintain diesel-powered generators, and build new electrical substations.

Myint Myint Sein, a UNV energy planner from Myanmar, is studying alternative energy sources for the remote northern islands of the country. The need is enormous. In 1988, the Cook Islands spent $4.5 million on imported petroleum alone.

"We want Ms. Sein to investigate the potential of resources which we already have — sun, waves and wind," says Deputy Prime Minister Akaruru, who also serves as Minister of Energy. "We have had such a bad experience providing costly diesel fuel to the far islands. Even if the fuel arrives, we often can't unload it because the sea is too rough."

Already, a pilot project on the northern island of Nassau has provided solar power for home electricity. Ms. Sein is studying the viability of extending the project to other islands.

The government relies on UNVs to help develop and conserve another precious resource: water. During the last two decades, the Cook Islands have experienced a severe dry spell every five years. The government, with the help of Japanese UNV Nobuhiko Hanazato, has been issuing warnings to conserve water and report all leaks. "We are trying to educate the public to limit water use," says Mr. Hanazato, a civil engineer. "Often families consider it an unlimited resource."

Throughout the islands, Mr. Hanazato is testing water availability and pressure. After conducting surveys, he designs and oversees construction of new water collection sites. "Piped water used to be non-existent in the outer islands," says George Cowan, Secretary of the Ministry of Works. "Now all islanders have water in their homes. UNVs are also helping us formulate an overall water policy, which we've never had before."

COOK ISLANDS

Gerd Lentze repairs machinery used for development of Avatiu Harbour in Raratonga.

Enduring signs of UNV work can be seen along the two roads which circle Raratonga, the country's largest island. As surveyors, draftsmen, architects, and mechanics, the seven volunteers in the Ministry of Works have helped to improve drainage, build three new bridges and repair 15 kilometres of the coastal road. The value of UNV contributions is not just in the form of concrete and mortar. For the injured Samoan rugby player whose life hung in the balance, the talents of a UNV surgeon proved to be a matter of life and death. ■

UNDP photos by Cherie Hart

Nobuhiko Hanazato *(left)* trains a surveyor at a water filtration construction site.

SPEAKING OUT

Habitat/Mark Edwards

Slums Are Not a Dead End

By Swaminathan S. Anklesaria Aiyar

For years people have been complaining about the explosion of slums in our cities. Every day, hundreds of new rural immigrants pour into our big urban centres and build shanty towns having no water or sanitation. Their influx has brought with it congestion, pollution and filth on an unprecedented scale. Numerous supposedly enlightened people want to put a stop to this. But the main problem lies in the vision of the elite, not in the slums themselves.

As it turns out, the immigrants enjoy better access to medical care, education and entertainment than they could ever dream of in their villages. The caste barriers that stop the lower castes in rural areas from rising are much less evident in cities. Opportunities for well-paid work, self-employment and a whole range of economic opportunities are far greater in the cities than in villages. The rural poor do not regard shanties as ideal accommodation, of course, but this disadvantage is minor compared to the great gains they have made.

The losers from the slum explosion are the urban elite. They find that the streets are too crowded for them to drive cars fast. Public parks and pavements turned into shanty towns offend them. The air stinks of refuse. They decry this as urban decay. But this is a special form of decay that benefits tens of millions of the wretchedly poor at the expense of the elite. It spreads urban benefits and rural wretchedness more evenly. Access to urban facilities is no longer monopolized by the elite but appropriated increasingly by poor rural immigrants, and the insanitary conditions of rural India are spreading to enclaves inhabited by the urban elite.

This is not, of course, an ideal state of affairs. It would be far better if we had honest politicians, honest municipalities and honest taxpayers willing to assist the poor on a massive scale. But since we don't, we have to look at second-best solutions.

The slum explosion is one of them. Of all our cities, Calcutta is undoubtedly the most miserable. And of all Calcutta's poor, the most wretched must include the homeless, those that do not have even a roof over their heads. A study of such shelterless Calcuttans by Jagannathan and Halder is revealing.

It shows that the vast majority of the homeless live above the poverty line. And no less than 36 per cent remit cash to their villages. So even the most wretched of the immigrants have greatly improved their incomes. And the social mobility and economic opportunities available in Bombay and Delhi mean that it is commonplace to find TV sets in shanties, sometimes even video tape recorders.

Ah, say the elite, but the living conditions in these slums have deteriorated dreadfully, with more uncollected refuse, bacteria and flies than ever before. Such living conditions do appear horrific to any visitor. But even in the worst slums, infant mortality has halved and life expectancy has doubled since independence. The wretched in urban slums are in many cases better off than the wretched in village hovels, who have no access to

The losers from the slum explosion are the urban elite.

"Speaking Out" is open to readers who wish to offer clear, well-supported positions on development issues. The views expressed in this column do not necessarily reflect those of UNDP.

Swaminathan S. Anklesaria Aiyar.

health care or preventive medicine, and whose wells can be more polluted than urban pumpsets.

The urban elite say, let's give better facilities to villages to prevent further migration. Romantic pastoralism sounds good but will not work in India. We have 800 million people but only 160 million hectares of arable land — just one-fifth of a hectare per person. Even with land reforms, poor farmers will never be able to pull themselves out of the poverty trap. Only urbanization can ensure decent living standards.

Prosperity comes through increasing the productivity of the work force, and both manufacturing and service industries are far more productive than agriculture. That is why prosperity in the West was accompanied by urbanization — cities are high productivity centres that can yield far higher incomes than farming.

Denmark is a country that rose to prosperity mainly on the basis of successful agriculture. Yet even in Denmark the urban population is 86 per cent of the total. What this shows is that successful agriculture inevitably leads to rapid urbanization. It should surprise nobody that Punjab — the breadbasket of India — has one of the fastest rates of urbanization in the nation.

One study of Zaffarabad, a slum in East Delhi, reveals that the locals call it "Mini-Japan." It is a stinking filthy hell of a place with no municipal facilities, but it is alive with workshops. According to Syed Sahed, the *Pradhan* (chief) of this stinking hole, "Ours is a settlement of 40,000 people with one hundred per cent employment. Every family has its own business, every man is known for his product."

They know, even if the urban elite does not, that the shanty town looks like a problem but is really a solution. The shanty town provides basic shelter of the kind that best fits the immigrants struggling up the income ladder. They know Zaffarabad and Japan are a century apart, but they can still see where the stinking hovels of Zaffarabad will ultimately lead to.

By all means let us have more slum improvement. We need to provide slums with sanitation and drinking water. We need to start schools and primary health centres and create bus services linking slums to city centres. But we must not get hung up on the mere existence of slums, which produce more winners than losers. Let us remember that neither romantic pastoralism nor urban elitism can lead to prosperity. The slum explosion will. ■

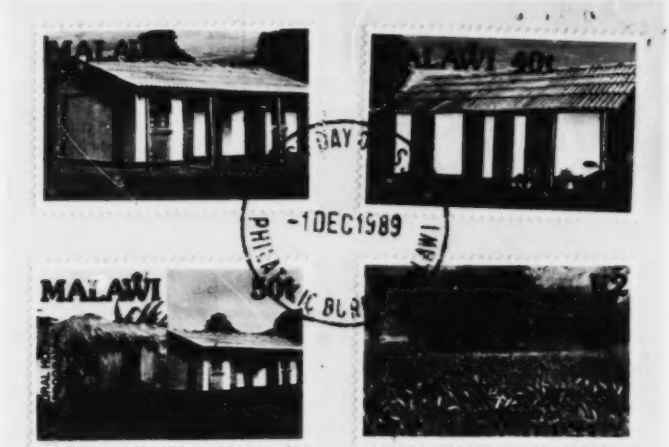
Swaminathan S. Anklesaria Aiyar *has been a journalist ever since completing his formal education with a B.Sc degree from St. Stephen's College, Delhi, and a B.A. from Magdalen College, Oxford. He is Editor of the Financial Express in Bombay.*

NEWSREEL

BANGLADESH TO GET FLOOD RELIEF

London — At a recent two-day meeting here attended by British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, an action plan was adopted to help Bangladesh protect itself against severe floods. The five-year plan was drawn up by the World Bank in collaboration with the Bangladesh Government and a team of international experts provided by UNDP. Representatives of international organizations and donor governments expressed their support for the plan, which will initially involve a series of flood protection pilot projects and studies estimated to cost $150 million.

The effort will lead to the construction of drainage and flood control systems for the venerable Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers. It will also enhance Bangladesh's flood warning capabilities, and improve disaster preparedness and management programmes. Said Erling Dessau, UNDP's Resident Representative in Bangladesh, "We came to London with one purpose, to launch the first stage of a long-range effort to help one of the poorest countries of the world break from the grip of recurring floods."



The Malawi Post Office has issued a set of commemorative stamps to celebrate 25 years of UN collaboration. The scenic stamps depict rural housing and agricultural projects supported by the United Nations Development Programme.

Moscow — The Global Forum on Environment and Development for Survival concluded its sessions here in Moscow in late January with a call for a plan of action that endorsed a proposal made by UNDP Administrator William H. Draper III. The recommendation, made by Mr. Draper during his speech here, urged that an international trust fund be established to help developing countries gain access to ecologically sound technologies.

The meeting was an important step in the preparation of an upcoming international conference on the environment to be held in Brazil in 1992. Organized by the New York-based Global Forum of Spiritual and Parliamentary Leaders for Survival, it focused on critical environmental and development issues facing the world. Attending the five-day event were nearly 1,000 people from 83 countries, including noted scientists, UN agency heads and government and spiritual leaders. Among the other speakers were UN Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, Astronomer Carl Sagan and Worldwatch Institute President Lester Brown.

Addressing the Forum, Mr. Draper said that any plan to safeguard the earth's environment must be supported by both developing and developed countries. "We can succeed in ensuring ecological security," he said, "only if north and south collaborate, and if environment is perceived as a unifying link, not a divisive issue."

While in Moscow Mr. Draper and other UN agency heads conferred with Soviet Foreign Minister Shevernadze on the changes taking place in the Soviet Union and how they might affect the country's role in international affairs.

Edited by Sid Kane

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